

Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, December 11, 1793, Statement, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES J. MSS.

December 11, 1793.

The President doubtless recollects the communications of mr. Ternant expressing the dissatisfaction of the Executive council of France with mr. Morris, our minister there, which, however mr. Ternant desired might be considered as informal: that Colo. Smith also mentioned that dissatisfaction, & that mr. Le Brun told him he would charge mr. Genet expressly with their representations on this subject; & that all further consideration thereon lay over therefore for mr. Genet's representations.

Mr. Genet, some time after his arrival (I cannot now recollect how long, but I think it was a month or more) coming to my house in the country one evening, joined me in a walk near the river. Our conversation was on various topics, & not at all of an official complexion. As we were returning to the house being then I suppose on some subject relative to his country (tho' I really do not recall to mind what it was), he turned about to me, just in the passage of the gate, & said, "but I must tell you we all depend on you to send us a good minister there, with whom we may do business confidentially, in the place of mr. Morris." These are perhaps not the identical words, yet I believe they are nearly so; I am sure they are the substance, & he scarcely employed more in the expression. It was unexpected & to avoid the necessity of an extempore answer, I instantly said something resuming the preceding thread of conversation, which went on, & no more was said about mr. Morris.

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From this, I took it for granted he meant now to come forward formally with complaints against mr. Morris, as we had been given to expect, & therefore I mentioned nothing of this little expression to the President. Time slipped along, I expecting his complaints, & he not making them. It was undoubtedly his office to bring forward his own business himself, & not at all mine, to hasten or call for it; & if it was not my duty, I could not be without reasons for not taking it on myself officiously. He at length went to New York, to wit, about the of without having done anything formally on this subject. I now became uneasy lest he should consider the little sentence he had uttered to me as effectually, tho' not regularly, a complaint. But the more I reflected on the subject, the more impossible it seemed that he could have viewed it as such; & the rather, because, if he had, he would naturally have asked from time to time, "Well, what are you doing with my complaint against mr. Morris?" or some question equivalent. But he never did. It is possible I may, at other times have heard him speak unfavorably of mr. Morris, tho' I do not recollect any particular occasion, but I am sure he never made to me any proposition to have him recalled. I believe I mentioned this matter to mr. Randolph before I left Philadelphia: I know I did after my return; but I did not to the President till the receipt of mr. Genet's letter of Sep. 30, which from some unaccountable delay of the post never carne to me in Virginia, tho' I remained there till Oct. 25. (and received there three subse-

quent mails), and it never reached me in Philadelphia till Dec. 2.

The preceding is the state of this matter, as nearly as I can recollect it at this time, & I am sure it is not materially inaccurate in any point.